Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace the paragraph beginning at line 9, page 5, with the following:

Referring to FIG 2A, a conceptualized ~~depicting~~ **depiction** of integrated circuit object placement produced by a placement algorithm according to the present invention is shown. In this depiction, an integrated circuit 120 includes latched objects 124A through 124E and non-latched objects 122A through 122D. The placement algorithm used to globally position these objects verifies, after initially placing the objects, that the proposed placement does not result in an unacceptably clustered placement of latched objects. If the symmetry of the latched objects as initially placed is inadequate and the resulting signal skew is unacceptably high, the placement algorithm is re-executed using additional placement constraints that are specific to ~~latch~~ **latched** objects and non-latched objects. When the algorithm ultimately completes, the clock tree is optimized for clock signal skew as well as clock signal delay.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at line 19, page 5, with the following:

As seen in FIG 2A, the latched object placement has an x-axis center of mass represented by reference numerals 128, the non-latched object placement is characterized by an x-axis center of mass 126, and the collective center of mass is represented by reference numeral 129. Because the ~~latch~~ **latched** object placement has been constrained by the placement methodology of the present invention to reduce latched object clustering or asymmetry and because a similar process has been applied to the non-latched objects, the center of mass points 126,128, and 129 are substantially closer to one another than the center of mass points in FIG 1A.